ONLY ONE PRODUCTION ON THE BOARDS THIS WEEK

Richard Bennett and Lola Fisher "Rio Grande" Empire

Margaret Hawkesworth Palace

Forbes-Robertson, Majestic Brooklyn

Louise Dresser "Potash and Perlmutter in Society" Standard

Curtis Cooksey and Lenore Ulrich "The Heart of Wetona" Lyceum.

"JUSTICE" ET AL.

The Theatrical and the Untheatrical—A Dramatic Miscellany.

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

THE persistent theatregoer met with an interesting experience during the past week. On successive evenings he was enabled to witness dramas representative of the two extremes in playwriting. He saw in "Justice" a simple, sincere and natural tragedy—an intense and superbly dramatic work that achieves its effects by an utter disregard of theatrical expedients. And he saw in "Rio Grande" a work that is of, by and for the theatre—a play that depends for its effectiveness upon the skilful and purely arbitrary handling of its purely theatrical characters and situations.

It would be possible, of course, to imagine a less theatrical piece than "Justice." Galsworthy has conformed to the elementary rules of the theatre; he has divided his play into acts and has so written it that it can be shown upon a stage in three hours or less. It is, consequently, a play. But having made that concession, Galsworthy has devoted himself to his theme and let the chips fall where they may. He has made no deliberate attempt to be untheatrical; his theme was his all, and he did not care whether he was theatrical or not.

If Galsworthy had been a practical playwright, telling a story and not developing a theme, he would have had no place for his second and third acts. Falder is guilty, and so it is dramatically unnecessary to show his trial and conviction. The man writing for the theatre would have shown this scene only in case he expected to bring it to an unforeshadowed conclusion. Similarly, it is quite apparent that a man convicted of a crime will go to jail. The theatrical dramatist would pass by his prison days and continue the story upon his release.

The first and last acts of "Justice" embody both story and theme; the second and third acts are theme alone. And, although every moment of the play will hold the spectator in its thrall, it is the storyless second and third acts that are the most powerful. Fine as were the scenes within the prison, they did not entrance us as did the simple trial in the second act. Never, in a reasonably active career of playgoing, have we been so gripped in a theatre as during Act II of John Galsworthy's "Justice."

One of the criticisms directed against this act was that it was too long. The judge's charge to the jury, it was said, might have been profitably cut. On the contrary, there is not a line in the act that could be cut. The scene finds its strength and its sincerity in the fact that it is not a trial tailored to fit a stage, but a trial as it would be in life. Certainly it was long. Iden Payne, who staged the play, knew that it was long. He knew that it was both long and tiresome—tiresome to the spectator at the trial, the supernumerary on the stage. Nearly all trials are tiresome. He showed his knowledge of this fact by having several of the stage spectators get up and walk out of the room while the trial was going on—a masterful touch. In "Common Clay" or "Just a Woman" the judge's charge would have been hopelessly long, but in "Justice" it is not to be measured. It is the judge's charge.

New York will wait many a long year before seeing another production with the simple power of "Justice." But it is not Galsworthy's disregard of dramatic form that gives the play its power. It is the fact that he had a message to deliver—a message that he believed in. There are few things so dangerous in the theatre as a disregard of the rules of the theatre. A Galsworthy may do it, but the method is not recommended to amateurs.

Just as the theatregoer who does not know "Justice" will find himself unable to anticipate it, so the playgoer at "Rio Grande," if he has been at all observant in the past, will find himself anticipating Augustus Thomas on numerous occasions. This does not mean that the action of Mr. Thomas's play is slow; indeed, it is decidedly rapid. It means that Mr. Thomas has constructed his play according to the theatrical standards, according to the acknowledged technique. When Nan turns out the lights and is about to leave the stage, in the second act, there probably were not ten people in the house who did not know that the villainous orderly would be the next person to come upon the scene. Mr. Thomas being a good play builder, it was inevitable. Also, Mr. Thomas's four curtains can be anticipated one to three minutes each.

And yet Mr. Thomas is right and Mr. Galsworthy is right. Each has written according to the standard that was natural to him. It is given to no one to state baldly that all plays should be constructed in such and such manner, but one thing is certain: it is safer to write in accordance with the rules of the game. The edition of Galsworthys is limited.

Mrs Fiske "Erstwhile Susan" Gaiety

Irene Fenwick and Harrison Hunter "The Co-respondent" Booth

Shelley Hull "The Cinderella Man" Hudson

"Ramona," probably the most highly touted film to date, has come and been seen, but it cannot be stated that it has achieved more than a fifty per cent conquest. It is a picture of considerable merit, far above the regulation "feature film"—but it is just a picture. It does not, as its sponsors hinted, mark the advance of the films from one world of art to another.

Since it is a picture above the average, however, it is certain to do its share to make film lovers dissatisfied with the average. In this respect it will continue the work begun by "The Birth of a Nation," and in that work we cannot but wish it success. Certainly it is reasonable to believe that a public which is shown that there are better things to be had will not easily return to the inferior brand. Carrying this line of reasoning further, it is evident that all that is necessary to eliminate the average picture is more of the better pictures.

More are coming. Robert Grau, writing in "The Billboard," lists Ince's "Civilization," Griffith's "The Mother and The Law" and "The Holy Grail," Tree's "Macbeth," Annette Kellerman's aquatic spectacle and others. What is in store for the motion picture industry is not merely a general raising of the artistic average, but, as Mr. Grau states, "better films from fewer producers." The Biograph Company, once monarch of all that the camera eye surveyed, is among the first to announce its withdrawal from the field.

Mr. Grau also points out that it will probably take fifty years for the proper development of the motion picture. Predicting is a thankless occupation, but the chances are that we will not be here fifty years from now, so we are about to risk it. It is our belief that the motion picture industry, long before half a century has elapsed, will be run on the same principle as is the legitimate stage. Just as much care will have to be expended on a film as is now customary with a stage production. They will be produced and will succeed or fail, as do plays.

There will be no change-of-programme-every-day picture theatres, for the manufacturers will not be making enough pictures to serve them. (Is it necessary to add that the lack of popular demand, and not a reluctance on the part of the manufacturers, will be responsible for the passing of the every-day theatre?) There will be in New York six or eight or twenty or fifty motion picture theatres, and some films will stay in town for a season and others will pass out in a week. And there you are.

Any one at all is at liberty to clip this out and file it away, and to dig it up fifty years from now for a fine rattling-the-skeleton paragraph.

THE TALL ONE.

THE SHORT ONE.

They are C. Hooper Trask and Helen Westley, acting in "The Age of Reason," at the Bandbox. Drawn by Reland Young.

Where actors congregate in these days there is only one subject of conversation. For a night and a day the Willard-Moran fight displaced it, but now it has returned to its supremacy. The burning question is this: Shall or shall not the actors join the union? Countless cases are cited to prove that the actor is always trod upon; everybody believes it, and still the argument continues.

"The musicians have got a union and they make the managers toe the mark," runs the customary argument. "You know how it works if you've ever been out with a musical show. Suppose the advance in the next town is good and the manager decides to put on a special matinee. What does he do? He says to somebody, 'Go through the train and ask the musicians what they'll want to play a matinee tomorrow. And, oh, yes! Don't forget to tell the actors to be at the theatre in time.' There you have it! ASK the musicians—and TELL the actors."

Undoubtedly the union is coming. What its effect on the theatre, and hence on the public, will be, is difficult to forecast.

"See America First" has passed, and there is no doubt as to the justness of the verdict. From out the wreckage, however, there arise certain lyrics to remind one that this first attempt of Messrs. Riggs and Porter was not a complete artistic failure. It is a bit unfair to print lyrics, for a song that goes well on the stage frequently looks ridiculous on paper. No one, however, need be ashamed of the following:

Now, you'd never infer
That as premier danseur
I was madly adored by the Russians;
But when leading the ballet
My dance bacchanale
Excited tremendous discussions.
With a negligee uniform
Over my pony form,
Thousands I made with delight reel!
In the get-up I had on
I looked like the ad on
A bottle of sparkling White Rock!

He was paid to say that,
He was paid to say that,
He was paid to say that about White Rock!

So here is to Messrs. Riggs and Porter! May they live long and write lyrics—and leave the book and music to somebody else.

Tireless research ever brings results. Although it seemed impossible, the dear, fussy, old latecomers at "Justice" found a new way in which to manifest their infinite ability as nuisances. Missing entirely the first scene in which John Barrymore participated, they mistook his second appearance for his first, and blundered into a tense situation with a loud round of welcoming applause. Doubtless the jolly souls have other methods of annoyance up the sleeves of their dinner coats, and are awaiting Sir Herbert's "Merchant of Venice" production with what patience they possess.

Indications are that the theatrical district will be enriched next season by the addition of at least one, and perhaps two or three or four, new theatres, which, as Rennold Wolf is in the habit of remarking, will fill a long-felt want. But, of course, it may be that they will not materialize. Everybody knows that blue dyestuff is hard to get just now, and the consequent scarcity of blueprint paper may result in an enforced change of mind by the managers.

In the first place, do not submit a play unless you are quite sure that you have an original, novel plot, with characters cleverly defined, a story that abounds with sympathetic romance, which stimulates the imagination and is full of logical and rapid action.—From Mary Pickford's advice to scenario writers.

You have noticed, of course, that that is the only kind of scenario that reaches production.

Some day, when managers cease to produce plays and Sunday pages can be written in ten minutes, we hope to be able to withdraw to a corner and decide for ourself what there is about the theatrical business that makes most of its people so forgetful. There are managers and actors and playwrights—dozens of them, literally—who can be introduced to the same person every night for a week, get his name wrong every time, and then be reintroduced on the first five days of the succeeding week and be unacquainted on the sixth. We know, for we are the person.

The Week's Premiere.

"THE CO-RESPONDENT," at the Booth to-morrow night. This play, the joint work of Anna Leal Pollock and Rita Welman, will mark Irene Fenwick's first appearance as a star. In the past Miss Fenwick's name has always followed that of the play, as, for instance, "'The Song of Songs,' with Irene Fenwick," or, forsooth, "'Pay-Day,' with Irene Fenwick." Now, however, for the near future at least it will be "Irene Fenwick in 'The Co-respondent.'"

The first act takes place in a Western town, and two acts are laid in a newspaper office. In spite of that fact the management denies it's a newspaper play.

Supporting Miss Fenwick in the principal male role will be Norman Trevor, recently seen in "Margaret Schiller." Others in the cast are Harrison Hunter, Marie Chambers, W. L. Gibson, H. H. Sleight, Suzanne Willa, Winifred Harris and Harry Hadfield. The play has been staged under the direction of J. C. Huffman.

WHERE PLAYS CONTINUE

CANDLER—An excellent production of Galsworthy's fine prison drama, "Justice." Cast headed by John Barrymore and O. P. Heggie.

EMPIRE—"Rio Grande," an army post melodrama by Augustus Thomas. A play that is thrilling, although a bit artificial.

PLAYHOUSE—"Captain Brassbound's Conversion," by Bernard Shaw. Grace George and others give a capital performance of a comedy full of charm and humor.

NEW AMSTERDAM — Sir Herbert Tree's production of "King Henry VIII." A magnificent production and cast headed by Sir Herbert, Lyn Harding and Edith Wynne Matthison.

LYCEUM—"The Heart of Wetona," an Indian melodrama of considerable power. Staged with all the Belasco art.

SHUBERT—"The Great Pursuit," an awkward play well acted by Marie Tempest, Bruce McRae and others.

BANDBOX—Four interesting one-act plays—"The Magical City," "The Age of Reason," "Pierre Patelin" and "Children."

GAIETY—Mrs. Fiske in "Erstwhile Susan," a laughable play about the ways of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Fine acting by Mrs. Fiske and John Cope.

BELASCO — "The Boomerang," the sensation of the year. A dramatic trifle made into a miracle by good acting and intelligent stage management.

ELTINGE—"Fair and Warmer," an uproarious farce that will keep on until fall.

PUNCH AND JUDY—A good dramatization of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, "Treasure Island."

LONGACRE—Leo Ditrichstein in a delightful play of grand opera life, "The Great Lover."

HUDSON—"The Cinderella Man," a charming retelling of an old story.

THIRTY-NINTH STREET THEATRE—Lou-Tellegen in "A King of Nowhere," an unimportant play in which the star and others are seen to advantage.

MAXINE ELLIOTT—Louis Mann in "The Bubble." The return of an old favorite.

CRITERION—"The Melody of Youth," a romantic Irish comedy of the days of long ago.

HARRIS—George M. Cohan's snappy farce, "Hit-the-Trail Holliday." A dramatization of Billy Sunday.

CORT—"The Blue Envelope," an old-style farce that will bring a number of laughs.

COMEDY—"The Fear Market," an undramatic play with a sensational theme.

FORTY-EIGHTH STREET THEATRE—"Just a Woman," a courtroom play with a number of highly dramatic moments.

REPUBLIC — "Common Clay," which also goes into a courtroom for its big scene.

ASTOR—"The Cohan Revue 1916," a brilliant musical show.

LIBERTY—"Sybil," with Julia Sanderson, Joseph Cawthorne and Donald Brian. Still popular.

PRINCESS—"Very Good Eddie," an enjoyable musical play of the intimate variety.

LYRIC—"Katinka," tuneful, popular and conventional.

COHAN—"Pom-Pom," with the snappy Mitzi Hajos.

WINTER GARDEN—"Robinson Crusoe, Jr.," with the humorous Jolson as Friday.

CASINO—"The Blue Paradise," with Cecil Lean and Cleo Mayfield.

HIPPODROME—It is now planned to continue "Hip! Hip! Hooray!" until the end of June.

ATOP THE NEW AMSTERDAM—Mr. Ziegfeld's Frolic, a show that begins where others leave off (from a point of time).

FRENCH THEATRE.

After a successful tour of Boston, Montreal and Chicago, the Theatre Français will begin a return engagement of three weeks to-morrow. The play of the first week will be "L'Amour Veille," by G. A. de Caillavet and Robert de Flers, with Yvonne Garrick in the leading role. The same comedy was played in this city two seasons ago by Billie Burke, under the title of "Love Watches," Jules Bois will make an address the opening night.

WITH THE STAGE FOLK

In Which One Hears About O. P. Heggie and Louis Edgard.

By F. C. SCHANG.

TRANSLATING English into English is the nightly duty of Louis Edgard, expert Cockney dialectician, who plays Felix Drinkwater in "Captain Brassbound's Conversion."

Edgard came to this country four years ago to play the Cockney tramp in "Passers-By." "I never dreamed that an American audience would understand it," he said. "I told Mr. Frohman my fears and suggested that I moderate the dialect somewhat. But he said: 'No, let us have the exact dialect as you give it to Londoners.' Well, I did, and it went just as well as in England.

"Later I played the Artful Dodger in 'Oliver Twist,' and I was worried again as to whether the audience would get the lingo. But they hadn't the slightest trouble.

"I was almost positive that Drinkwater wouldn't go over, for there were parts that I could hardly get myself. When I was studying the part I had to rewrite Shaw into English and then transfer it back into Cockney. But my former experience was repeated. Apparently the audiences of New York are so cosmopolitan that dialect has no terrors for them. They understand it perfectly."

Here are some of Drinkwater's lines, as conceived and spelled by Bernard Shaw, which puzzled even so experienced a Cockney actor as Edgard:

"Thet's im—enginest jedge in Hingland!" ("That's him—hangingest judge in England.")

"Is bed, lidy? Weoll, e ynt pertickler, lidy. E ez a chawce of henny flegstown agin thet wall." ("His bed, lady? Well, he ain't particular, lady. He has a choice of any flagstone against that wall.")

"She's took y'bed from hander yr for a bloomin penny hawcemen." ("She's taken your bed from under you for a blooming penny ice-man.")

"The owl dezzit is lawk a bloomin Awd Pawk demonstrition." ("The whole desert is like a blooming Hyde Park demonstration.")

"I'm a great admirer of American humor," continued Mr. Edgard. "It's quick and flashy. The Cockney has the same quality, and that's the reason why it takes and is so readily understood here."

The lowly origin of the Cockney and his absolute dependence on himself for his livelihood are what make him so sharp, says Mr. Edgard.

"The Cockney is in a class by himself," he continued. "The gutter is his school and his playground. 'Reared on gin in Drury Lane, father unknown, mother single,' was Kipling's definition of him. His principal characteristics are his extreme curiosity and his intense humanity. His civility is always a cloak to hide some mischief. He glories in petty things—like stealing a handkerchief. Then he goes and gloats over his cleverness to his companions. At heart he isn't bad. What is most remarkable to me is his great courage. The Cockney's curiosity makes him afraid of nothing. That's why he makes the best soldier."

Mr. Edgard said that there was one typical example of Cockneyism in "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" that showed Shaw knows the species thoroughly. It is the incident of Drinkwater's first meeting with Sir Howard Hallam, the English judge:

"I have seen you somewhere before," says Sir Howard.

"You ev, Sir Ahrd. But aw do assure yer it were hall a mistake," answers the snivelling Cockney.

Sir Howard: "As usual. Wrongfully convicted, of course."

Drinkwater "Naow, cavner" (half whispering, with an ineffable grin). "Wrongfully hacquittid!"

Sir Howard: "Indeed! That's the first case of the kind I have ever met."

Drinkwater: "Lawd, Sir Ahrd, wot jagginses them jurymen was! You an me knaowed it too, didn't we?"

"There couldn't be a more typical incident," said Mr. Edgard. "That's exactly the Cockney way. He'd admit participation in a murder if he could make himself out as smart by so doing."

SHARING interest with the performance of John Barrymore in Galsworthy's "Justice" is that of O. P. Heggie, who plays Cokeson, the chief clerk. Mr. Heggie, an Australian by birth, youth and education, is only thirty-seven, and he has at this age established himself as one of the foremost actors in modern English plays, having to his credit performances of Shaw, Barrie, Galsworthy, Chesterton, et al.

His position is the more firmly established when it is mentioned that on two occasions he joined London Hippodrome revues. From the sublime to the ridiculous, you will say, as, for instance, the Playhouse to the Winter Garden; but Mr. Heggie declares that this experience gave him an intense satisfaction—the artistic realization of super-versatility, so to speak. To the New York public, however, Mr. Heggie will be eternal as Androcles, the delightful person who pulled a sliver out of the lion's paw.

Mr. Heggie was such an unqualified success as Androcles because, perhaps, in more than any other role he has assumed, the philosophy of Androcles is his own. He is a shy, quiet, whimsical, gentle sort of man, with the gentlest voice and manner. Indeed, it was quite to be expected that he should be discovered at his home sipping tea with cream in it and dangling his three-year-old daughter, an active young one, with round cheeks and a portly, pokable stomach.

Mr. Heggie said that to him the most encouraging sign for the progress of the English-speaking stage was the ready way in which English and American actors mingled in productions both here and abroad, and the hearty welcome accorded English plays in this country and American plays in England.

"That is exactly the proper spirit," he said; "the stage is cosmopolitan. There should be nothing which savors of protective tariff in the attitude of theatre folk. It is fine that Sir Herbert Tree and Granville Barker can be successful here, and that Charles Frohman and David Belasco and others can be successful in England. It speaks worlds for the health and wholesomeness of conditions. The biggest successes in England to-day are American plays played by American actors.

"There is no doubt in my mind that in some respects, English actors cannot be approached. They undoubtedly excel in drawing-room scenes, in—what shall I say?—the cerebral drama. But in farce and comedy the American actor is in a class by himself. And the American actress! She has the English actress beaten every way! Imagine, for instance, what a sorry sight an English company would be in 'Erstwhile Susan' or 'The Boomerang.'"

Mr. Heggie took part in the production of "Justice," which was staged by Barker and Galsworthy in London some years ago. When asked to compare that production with the present one, a provincial shyness overcame him which amounted almost to awe. "Won't you have another cup of tea?" he asked.

He did say, however, that Galsworthy was a quiet, unassuming chap, who came to all the rehearsals with a notebook, and seemed perpetually steeped in thought. "A student is what he is," said Mr. Heggie; "his thoughts, looks, words and actions all gave that impression. He worked hand in hand with Barker, and they were in constant conference. Frequently the actor would be invited into these conferences, and there was a complete harmony among actor, author and producer, which is rarely the case." Mr. Heggie also played in Galsworthy's "Strife."

Heggie was born in the Australian bush and educated at Adelaide College. When he was twenty-one he tired of the law, which he had been studying, and joined a local troupe of actors. His first play was "A Message from Mars," played in Sydney. For five years he did stock, and then he went to London. After weeks of failure he got a part in "The Lemonade Boy" by memorizing his lines overnight. Ellen Terry liked his performance in this piece, and when she came to this country in 1907 she brought him along. He played the juvenile in "Nance Oldfield."

Back in England, he had no difficulty in obtaining work, and was engaged, successively, by all the London managers. He did everything from Sherlock Holmes to a song duet with Ethel Levy. On his last trip here he played in "The New Sin" and "The Highway of Life."

New Yorkers will be glad to know that Mr. Heggie is so fond of this town that in the future he intends to spend his winters here.